

Hereford Heckler



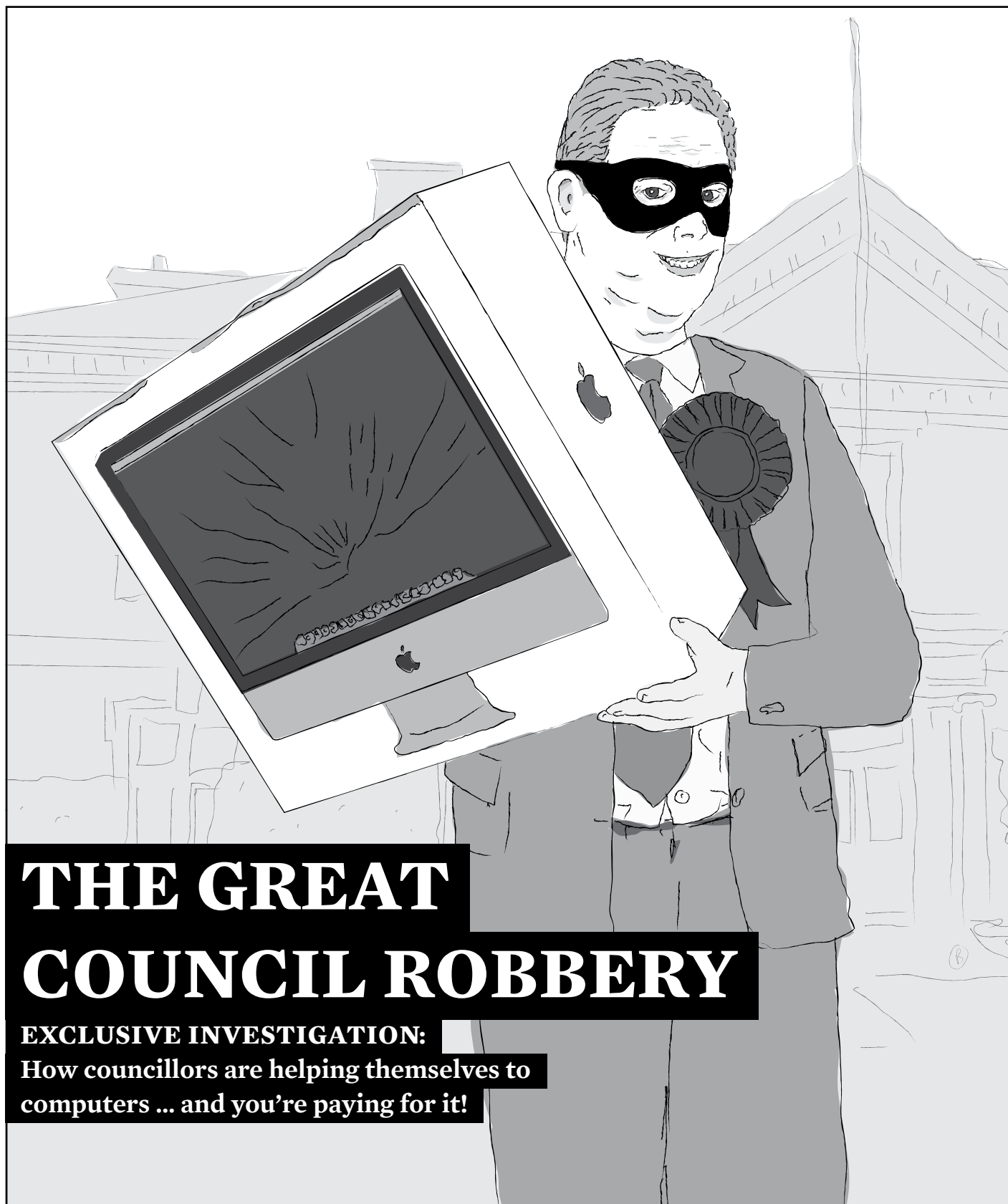
Independent anarchist news and views

FREEDOM, EQUALITY, COMMUNITY • #23 • FEBRUARY 2014

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THE GREAT COUNCIL ROBBERY

EXCLUSIVE INVESTIGATION:

**How councillors are helping themselves to
computers ... and you're paying for it!**

COUNCILLORS BUY THEMSELVES IPADS, IMACS WITH YOUR MONEY

Councillors are using taxpayer's money to buy themselves computers while jobs and services on the frontline are being cut.

And amid the dire financial crisis Herefordshire Council finds itself in, over £35,000 has haemorrhaged, with those at the top personally benefitting.

In 2011 councillors were each allocated a £1,000 allowance over a three-year term to buy ICT equipment, a move designed to reduce paper work and encourage tablet computer use in council meetings.

Herefordshire Council decided not to use its buying power to bulk-purchase the necessary 58 tablets—and thereby obtaining the best value for money—but instead allowed each councillor the freedom to purchase whatever ICT equipment they saw fit.

And under allowance rules all computers automatically become the personal property of the councillor, not the council.

After an eight-month freedom of information battle—which initially saw the council refuse to let us see copies of councillors' expenses unless we visited their offices in person—the *Hereford Heckler* can reveal the scale of the financial abuse.

A total of £36,122.86 was given away to councillors during the first two years since the scheme began (2011–2013).

Carolyn Cameron, the council's senior governance support officer, told us that "equipment purchased by councillors under the scheme belongs to the councillor and will not be returned to the council at the end of their term in office".



Cllr Marcelle Lloyd-Hayes and Cllr Peter Sinclair Knipe: You'd look this pleased if you realised you could nick computers and get away with it.

COUNCIL LEADER BLAGS TWO COMPUTERS IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS

In January last year, just as Herefordshire Council was in the middle of deciding which services would be cut, leader Cllr Tony Johnson went out to Hereford's iStore on the 31st to buy himself an iPad and iPad case, both with council money (£368).

Yet taxpayers had already put their hands in their pockets just 18 months previously on 18 July 2011 so Johnson could buy a laptop, case, printer, service contract and high-speed cable totalling £680.58.

Nice work if you can get it.

WATER WATER EVERYWHERE

"The current model for allocating flood defence funding is biased towards protecting property, which means that funding is largely allocated to urban areas."

This comment by a parliamentary select committee echoes Defra, who claim that over the next 10 years 35,000 hectares of A-grade agricultural land will be regularly flooded.

Clearly there is a need to protect people's homes from flooding but flood defences are a short-term solution. What is needed is action to tackle climate change, a long-term problem that the 'greenest government ever' has completely failed to address. Even simple schemes previously available to help us like home insulation have been removed by the Eton boys. Instead we have a green deal—a complicated, bureaucratic loan system run by large corporations that no



one in their right minds would bother with.

The government's attitude to climate change was recently voiced by backbench MP, Neil Parish, who said "we have got to force the sea back and keep it out, not retreat from it like we have been for years"! Even the National Farmers' Union understand the problem.

"We are seeing more of these intense extreme weather events," said Peter Kendall, chair of the NFU.

"Climate change does now really challenge mankind's ability to feed itself."

To deal with the real threat of flooding and other extreme weather events, climate change must be pushed to the top of the political agenda. But while hot topics like immigration and the economy hog the headlines it's doubtful that will happen any time soon.

Thanks to all our contributors this issue: Gaffer, Ms Take, Palladiola, Pelican Morals and our talented cover illustrator
☎ HEREFORDHECKLER.CO.UK/WRITE-FOR-US

WHO ATE ALL THE EGG MAYOS? YOU F... PHIL ATE ALL THE EGG MAYOS

Not content with a swag bag full of computers, Cllr Phil Cutter also thinks we should pay for his lunch.

On 14 September 2012, he helped himself to an egg mayo sandwich, a packet of Tyrrells crisps and a Twix (£3.52) from the BP garage at Wilton,



just a two-minute walk from his house.

Four days later taxpayers paid for a £2.79 coronation chicken meal.

And on 6 November 2012 he returned to BP for another egg mayo sandwich (£1.99).

How many other bosses pay for their employees' lunches?

We were also told that councillors already have dedicated IT facilities at the council's Brockington headquarters on Hafod Road.

"In addition, all councillors receive a crypto-card following election, which enables them to hot-desk from any council building [in the county] or wherever is convenient to them."

A total of £19,960.04 was claimed in 2011–2012 for ICT expenses. The year's top spenders were:

- Cllr Jonathan Lester, who claimed £999 for an Apple iMac computer;
- Cllr Marcelle Lloyd-Hayes, who claimed the full £1,000 for an Apple MacBook Air;
- Cllr Peter Sinclair-Knipe, who also claimed the full £1,000 for a Dell PC;
- Cllr Gary Swinford, who claimed £999 for an Apple MacBook Pro laptop.

Claims in 2012–2013 were down slightly on the previous year, totalling £16,162.82. Four top spenders all claimed the full £1,000:

- Cllr Carl Attwood, who bought an Apple MacBook Air laptop;
- Cllr Phil Cutter, who bought an Acer desktop computer, Acer Iconia tablet, keyboard dock and stylus;
- Cllr Barry Durkin, who bought an Apple iPad, Sony laptop and anti-glare film for an iPhone;



Exhibit A: an Apple iPad

- Cllr Anthony Powers, who bought an Asus laptop, Acer monitor, Samsung Galaxy tablet, an external hard drive and a Vodafone Sure Signal 3G booster box. Out of these eight, two councillors' claims particularly stood out:

• Cllr Marcelle Lloyd-Hayes, It's Our County member for Tupsley ward and a Ledbury Road resident, lives within walking distance of several council offices and with her own dedicated IT resource at Brockington just 10-minutes away on foot. Lloyd-Hayes, who undoubtedly had IT facilities at home prior to her 2011 claim, saw it fit to use council money to buy herself a top-spec computer.

We got in touch with Cllr Lloyd-Hayes and asked whether she thought spending £1,000 for unnecessary equipment was a gross misuse of public money. We were told she would "use IOC WEBSITE [sic] for those interested in my expenses". To date she has said nothing on her party's website regarding the ICT allowance;

• The invoice for Cllr Peter Sinclair-Knipe's £1,047.60 Dell PC was made out to his business, The SK Partnership. Can the council be sure that the Conservative member for Hollington ward has not abused his allowance in order to obtain IT equipment for his private businesses, which include Social Season Hatters, an online retailer?

We asked Cllr Sinclair-Knipe for further information on his ICT spending, which he refused to give. Instead we were advised to contact the council's monitoring officer.

Cllr Carl Attwood told us that home IT facilities are essential.

"Some of the work I have been asked to do as part of my councillor duties has required the writing of a document which when fully published with all the supporting papers will run to around 500 pages.

"This has to date occupied over 120 hours work, much of which would have been nigh impossible to do carting all the paperwork to council offices and often at out-of-office hours."

All other councillors featured in this article were given the opportunity to respond but refused our invitation.

Important questions need to be asked: Why is responsibility for IT procurement not given to council staff? And why don't councillors return all work-related IT equipment when their term in office ends?

A review of the ICT and consumables allowance is due to take place prior to next year's local elections.

OPPOSE THE EDL IN WORCESTER

The far-right English Defence League will be holding a national demonstration in Worcester next month as part of their long-running 'campaign against Islamism' (AKA one big booze-up).

Their choice of Worcester appears to be random, with no real focus to the event other than the usual bit of exercise for the rotund, middle-aged undesirables these protests attract.

Three Counties Anti-Fascist Alliance is calling for people from across the region to oppose the EDL. It's a call that the *Hereford Heckler* whole-heartedly support—fascism is best managed when it's nipped in the bud.

The EDL are yet to announce firm details for the day beyond a date of Saturday 22 March.

📍 **OPPOSE THE EDL: SATURDAY 22 MARCH, WORCESTER. CHECK 3CAFA.WORDPRESS.COM AND HEREFORD HECKLER ON FACEBOOK FOR UPDATES**



EDL members react angrily as police decide to confiscate their brain cell

RADICAL CHANGE NEEDED IN GREEN MOVEMENTS



Last year's loss of the Edgar Street lime trees left many people in Hereford feeling angry and disappointed. The trees were removed by the scheming and collusion of Herefordshire Council and the Environmental Agency. In opposition to their plans was a small but determined campaign group, which we at the *Heckler*

were initially supportive of.

Whether this road widening plan has reduced congestion or will speed up entry to the soon-to-open shopping complex is open to debate. But there is no doubt that any traffic-management measures on Edgar Street are welcomed by those people who have to drive along there on a daily basis.

The passionate campaign that opposed the felling was driven by environmental concerns about the reduction of green space in Hereford, and it's hard to argue with that—it seems obvious that green spaces should be an essential part of any city. But do these views take into account the realities of living in the world as it is today?

We live in a world with an ever-increasing population and with it comes the need to build more houses, roads and other infrastructure projects like high-speed rail links. No matter how efficiently we organise our communities a certain level of growth is inevitable and necessary. But we need to ensure that this growth is sustainable.

Another driving factor that comes at odds with environmentalism is economic growth. Many campaigners across the globe make the link between capitalism, growth and environmental destruction and promote a revolutionary, anti-capitalist form of ecology as a result. Unfortunately some of the environmentalists in Britain and other countries remain stuck in a green ghetto, seeing things in black and white terms of beautiful planet v. destructive humans. It is a ghetto that is as isolated as it is unresponsive to modern needs.

If we really want to challenge the destruction of the world around us we need to move on from NIMBYism, signing petitions or voting for 'sympathetic' political parties and instead think about real, radical change, both social and personal. Otherwise it'll be the same faces holding hands and singing songs when the bypass ploughs through the Lugg flats in a few years.

1914: TEACHERS STRIKE FOR BETTER PAY



This year is the centenary of the 1914 Herefordshire teacher's strike.

Teachers first walked out on Monday 2 February in a fight for higher wages, with the *Daily Telegraph* at the time reporting 69 schools closed by the Tuesday.

Many pupils refused to go to school and be taught by scabs, with significant disturbances happening around the county.

These photos (taken from that week's *Hereford Times*) show some of the mischief pupils created in support of their teachers.



LEDBURY (ABOVE): "Miss Creasy, the new mistress, surrounded by girls who prevent her entering the school."

ASHPERTON (TOP LEFT): "Group of Ashperton children who refused to go to school because their master (Mr Bolton) was on strike, and a new man (Mr Dry) was taking his place."

HEREFORD SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE NATIONAL 'CRAP TOWNS' LIST

Sam Jordison and Dan Kieran certainly ruffled plenty of municipal feathers when they brought out their *Crap Towns* anthology more than 10 years ago. The 'winner' was Kingston-upon-Hull, supplanted in the second edition the following year by Luton. Hereford never made it into either of these editions. One wonders whether the dreaded duo ever ventured this far west. After all, it is easy to get lost after the M50 suddenly peters out at Ross-on-Wye.

So, in the hope that Jordison and Kieran are avid *Heckler* readers—and at the risk of causing Cllr Nick Nenadich's *Positive Hereford* Facebook page to crash—here, in reverse order, is our checklist of the city's 10 worst municipal horrors they should look out for.

☹ **City library and museum, Broad Street** – 140 years old this year, yet it feels like it hasn't had any TLC in all that time.

☹ **Walmart's huge Asda supermarket** – Just about the most inappropriate building you could think of to set on a beautiful river bank, together with its totally-unfathomable roundabout (reputedly 'designed' by experts from the government's jack-booted Highways Agency).

☹ **The dowdy, half-empty Buttermarket**, which Herefordshire Council is trying to con the city council into taking over (£1m required for roof repairs and at least another £2m for a top-to-tail modernisation. The city council's annual budget? £734,960!).



Rockfield carpark in construction

☹ **The new livestock market, Roman Road** – A lost opportunity to put up something architecturally impressive, instead of a timber-slatted mega-shed.

☹ **The Left Bank restaurant complex** – Empty for more than two years (also said to have been mysteriously stripped of many of its fixtures and fittings) now with plans to reopen again as a restaurant and offices.

☹ **The burnt-out Card Factory/River Island buildings in High Town**, an ugly shell for more than three years.

☹ **The pathetic replacements** for the needlessly-desecrated avenue of 10 40-year-old European lime trees on Edgar Street, all so that shoppers will be able to effortlessly drive their cars into the multi-storey car park serving the Waitrose and Debenhams stores in the naffly-named Old Market retail quarter.

☹ **The hideously over-scaled Old Market retail complex** – Looming above the Steels roundabout and described by one city councillor as 'a blot on the landscape'. There is no truth in the rumour that Stanhope's next rebranding exercise will be to name it 'Jarvis's Folly'.

☹ **Hereford cathedral's extravagant and self-important 'refurbishment' of Cathedral Close**. The money would have been better spent on a more visible and well-stocked foodbank.

☹ **The disgraceful removal of the Wolverson family's popular Rockfield DIY store**, now a surface-level public car park at a cost of more than £150,000. Any other local authority with vision would have earmarked this site as the location for a state-of-the-art transport interchange. Worcestershire County Council is building the £14m Bromsgrove transport interchange, scheduled to open in 2015. But of course Herefordshire Council doesn't 'do' visionary projects.



The city's latest contemporary art installation failed to impress

Report a pothole

☹ VISIT THIS LINK TO HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S ONLINE POTHOLE REPORTING SERVICE: TINYURL.COM/K3BLFOE

WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

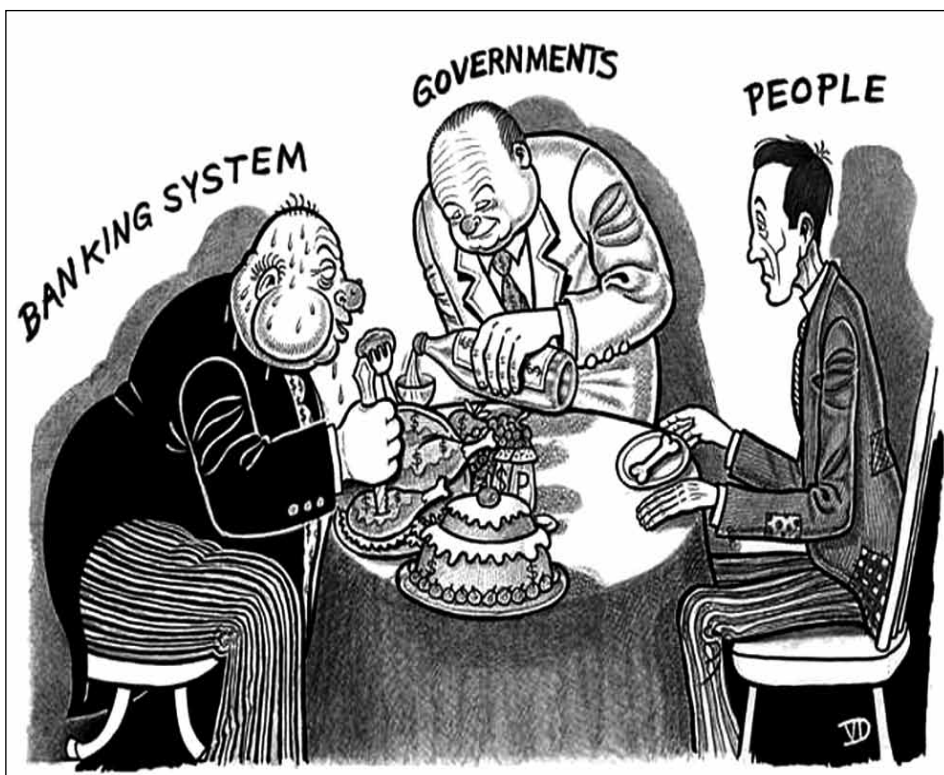
Anarchist-communism is a theory of anarchism that advocates the abolition of the state, capitalism, wages and private property and in favour of common ownership of the means of production and direct democracy. It calls for a horizontal network of voluntary associations and workers' councils, with production and consumption based on the guiding principle 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their need'.

It is often attacked as being a utopian dream; the argument goes that both government and money are necessary because of 'human nature'. Won't new forms of exploitation and new classes arise? Isn't it inevitable that some people have more power than others? Isn't the state necessary to keep order? We say a loud no!

A society without rulers will create new communities and ways of organising that asserts the equality of all individuals in decision-making. It will depend on full access to, and the communication of, information and participation in assemblies at the neighbourhood, district or regional level, instead of electing politicians to make decisions on our behalf. Given that there will be no coercive state apparatus to enforce decisions the aim throughout will be to achieve results on the basis of consensus and compromise.

"Education in the widest sense must prioritise personal growth and a love of freedom"

Anarchist-communist society will be moneyless. Goods and services will be made available on the basis of need with society as a whole determining priorities for production. This will need careful planning but the horror stories of 'feeding frenzies' or people stockpiling goods are sheer fantasies. There is a limit to the number of things that people can consume, possessiveness will become an aberration not the norm, there will be no 'wealth' to accumulate, no advertising to over-stimulate demand and instead education about the benefits of sharing, solidarity and cooperation. All of this will naturally



➔ **FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANARCHISM VISIT [LIBCOM \(LIBCOM.ORG\)](http://LIBCOM.ORG) AND [AK PRESS \(AKUK.COM\)](http://AKUK.COM)**

limit demand and allow production and consumption to be balanced.

It may be objected that this basis of social organisation is fine for village-sized populations but is unworkable on a large scale. However, there is no reason why it could not operate on a larger scale if it is based on the principles of cooperation and federation, which would still allow for freedom and equality. Even within capitalism huge organisations are often little more than clusters of small groups organised within a given structure. Local small-scale efforts are channeled in a particular direction. There is no reason those efforts could not be organised voluntarily for the common and individual good, with the initiative coming from streets and neighbourhoods and not boardrooms.

For an anarchist-communist society to operate effectively, education in the widest sense must prioritise personal growth and a love of freedom together with a sense of responsibility and cooperation. Capitalist education has destroyed a natural social

solidarity by stressing individualist competition and an allegiance to queen, country and company. An anarchist-communist approach to education would allow natural, social tendencies to develop so that individuals could participate in society with confidence and respect for others.

Most other ideologies aim to dominate and control nature and indeed the last centuries have witnessed a total transformation of the natural world, as it has been twisted and distorted to fit the supposed needs of human beings. Now nature is giving its reply, to such an extent that the very existence of humanity is threatened. Anarchist-communism seeks to work in harmony with natural forces, utilising appropriate levels of technology to meet people's needs. There are enough resources on the planet to provide a living for all, without destroying the planet in the process.

Anarchist-communism is the only ideology which challenges all exploitation and oppression, whether it be of workers by bosses, women by men or the environment by human beings. It alone emphasises both freedom of the individual and solidarity within the community, pointing the way forward to survival and well-being.

BORDERLINES FESTIVAL 2014

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BRUEGEL

Current predictions suggest that the Edgar Street Grid's Odeon multiplex won't be opening at Easter after all, as ex-leader John Jarvis so confidently predicted a year ago. Which means that the Courtyard's unchallenged role as Hereford's premier film centre continues.

The 12th Borderlines Film Festival (28 February–16 March) promises to be the biggest yet, with more than 200 screenings of 78 movies (including four Best Picture Oscar-nominees) at 32 venues across Herefordshire, Shropshire and the Marches.

Star billing has to be given to *12 Years a Slave*, not simply because it has no fewer than 18 screenings, but because it collected an impressive 10 Oscar nominations. Other star attractions are the long-awaited *Inside Llewyn Davies* from the Coen Brothers; *Blue is the Warmest Colour*; *Captain Phillips*; *Nebraska*; and *Philomena*. For jazz lovers, the documentary about the legendary New Orleans pianist James Booker, *Bayou Maharajah* is an absolute must.

Two rare French classics are on offer: Jean Cocteau's *Orphée* and Jean-Luc Godard's *À Bout de Souffle*. This restored 1960 crime



thriller was Godard's first feature-length film and was to become one of the cornerstones of the French nouvelle vague movement. It was also the incomparable Jean-Paul Belmondo's first starring role (with the

game Jean Seberg playing his girlfriend). Seven years later, Godard turned down an invitation to direct *Bonnie and Clyde* (starring Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway) and it seems more than coincidental that the two movies' opening scenes—introducing the handsome young hoodlums—are so similar.

Another link between these two classic gangster movies is that Beatty tried (unsuccessfully) to persuade Warner to make *Bonnie and Clyde* in black-and-white; a medium that would have enhanced the horror of the final slo-mo ambush scene.

Last year the *Independent's* film critic described *Museum Hours* as "a lesson in looking", which admirably sums up this touching study of an art gallery guard's seemingly tedious daily routine of sitting on a chair watching visitors study works of art, in Vienna's famous Kunsthistorisches Museum. Nihilistic it may be, lacking any action, romance, or drama, but it will teach you everything you ever wanted to know about Bruegel.

📍 **TICKETS CAN BE BOOKED ONLINE**
(WWW.BORDERLINESFILMFESTIVAL.ORG)
OR THROUGH THE BORDERLINES BOX
OFFICE: 01432 340555

ARTIST REVIEW

MEGAN BRADLEY

Megan Bradley is a young lady that I was first made aware of when she stepped up and spoke very sweetly introducing her first song at Recon open mic night in Malvern.

Megan is a singer-songwriter. You may think we've had enough of those acoustic singer-songwriter types, but this lady uses the format to her advantage. The stripped back sound of an acoustic guitar and a sweet but strong vocal are a great set-up to show her raw talent, but you can also tell she wouldn't be dwarfed by a larger sound with a full band.

Her content is something that personally struck me. She writes with a beautiful simplicity, which reminds you the world is a nice place. The real emotion you get from her performance and lyrics is just amazing; I fail to keep the hairs on the back of my neck from rising when she breaks into quirky love songs like *Letters*. I'm once again in love with the world after I've heard *Childhood* and the fantastic, yet realistic, breakdown of a



bedtime routine the song is about.

Some of the song structures are quite similar and a good quality recording would help but when you have choruses as quirky and catchy as *Happy as Larry* I feel this criticism seems much less important.

Megan's real talent is her ability to write beautiful and catchy melodies. Her honesty and clarity in looking at the small picture is refreshing and maybe this is what sets her apart from the rest of the acoustic-guitar-and-vocal performers.

There is a misconception that local music is a bit naff. But what we must remember

is *all* musicians were once 'local musicians' and that it's largely up to us how much attention they get. This musician deserves the recognition of her talent more than most.

Megan Bradley is for fans of Laura Marling, She & Him, and Emmy the Great.

📍 [SOUNDCLOUD.COM/MEGANBRADLEY8](https://www.soundcloud.com/meganbradley8)
[WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/8MEGANB](https://www.youtube.com/8MEGANB)

WHAT'S ON

Live music around the county

Point Zero @ The Oxford Arms, Kingston
Saturday, 1 March 2014, 8pm

Will Killeen @ The Herdsman, Hereford
Saturday, 1 March 2014

Trevor Burton Band
@ The Prince Of Wales, Ledbury
Sunday, 2 March 2014, 4pm

Cider City Jazzmen
@ The Barrels, Hereford
Monday, 3 March 2014

Vo & Tyler @ The Granary, Leominster
Tuesday, 4 March 2014, 8pm

Worried Men @ The Golden Cross, Sutton St Nicholas
Friday, 7 March 2014

Hereford Live presents: Gulp (with support from Wynnona Ryder & Key Green) @ The Jailhouse, Hereford
Saturday, 8 March 2014, 8pm

📍 **FOR MORE LIVE MUSIC LISTINGS VISIT**
HEREFORDLIVE.CO.UK

LONG LIVE THE BULLS!

It's hard to be a Hereford United fan at the moment. Flirting with administration, staff redundancies and struggling at the bottom of the Conference is enough to get anyone down.

Surprisingly though there has been a ray of light coming out of the gloom at Estadio Edgar and that is the dedication shown by supporters.

More than once this season the supporters have been called on to dig deep when funds have dried up. This has included paying extra at the turnstiles during a difficult Christmas period and donating money to avoid the winding-up order in January. We should be proud of what we the supporters have done and will do to save our club.

If the threat of administration does



materialise and we are relegated we, the supporters, will still be here. Directors and players come and go but fans stay loyal.

The determination to ensure the longevity of the club has been shown by the formation of the Hereford United Supporters' Trust. The trust has been set up to "provide a strong, pro-active, and independent voice for all supporters of Hereford United". Their first major act has been to register the Edgar Street stadium as an Asset of Community Value, ensuring that supporters will have a say if the ground ever comes up for sale.

At times like these it's far too easy to criticise the board, the manager or the players. Let's just be glad that we are doing our bit and will continue to do so. Come on you whites!



HORROR BULLS VICTORIOUS IN OPENING BOUT

Hereford Roller Girls travelled to north Wales on Saturday 2 February, where they played Wirral Whipiteres in the opening tie of the 2014 Heartland Series tournament.

After going behind, Hereford's Horror Bulls made a fantastic comeback and emerged winners, 165-115 points.

The Horror Bulls' next bout takes place

when the Heartland Series comes to Hereford on Sunday 9 March, where they play old adversaries Evolution Rollergirls from Shrewsbury.

Also playing at the Leisure Centre will be Derby's Haunted City Rollers against Swansea's Reaper Rollergirls. Tickets are likely to sell fast and can be bought from herefordrollergirls.co.uk.

A GOOD YEAR AHEAD FOR LOCAL RUNNERS

2014 is shaping up to be a great year for Hereford's running community.

St Michael's Hospice are organising their annual half marathon on 11 May. Setting off from the Leisure Centre, this year is set to be the busiest yet.

Herefordshire Mind are building on the success of their 10km race by joining forces with other local charities to organise the Herefordshire Running Festival, billed as "an event to increase awareness of mental health and encourage people to lead healthier lifestyles". Taking place on Sunday 21 September they are offering a marathon, a half-marathon, a 10km and a two-mile fun run.

📍 TO CATCH UP ON ALL THINGS RUNNING-RELATED IN THE COUNTY AND BEYOND WE RECOMMEND YOU VISIT WYEVALLERUNNERS.CO.UK



Herefordshire Running Festival